

1967

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WASHINGTON

ROBERT KENNEDY, D-N.Y., and EDWARD KENNEDY, D-MASS.

Peacekeeping Naval Force

WASHINGTON — Keep your eyes glued on the proposal by the Kennedy brothers to have the United Nations set up an emergency naval force for use in the Middle East crisis.

This trial balloon was lofted for U.N. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg with the backstage support of Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, and of presidential assistant Walt Rostow, although it has never been approved by President Johnson.

Sens. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Robert Kennedy, D-N.Y., in separate but identical statements, called on the Security Council to authorize the U.N. naval force. Their proposal came immediately after United Arab Republic President Nasser announced mining of the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba.

Briefed in advance by Goldberg, the Soviet U.N. delegate, Nikolai Podgorniy is privately encouraging the project, although making it clear the Kremlin will not publicly support the U.N. naval force because of Nasser's opposition.

In proposing the U.N. naval patrol, its backers have a lot more in mind than just using it to keep peace in the Straits of Tiran and prevent interference with Israel's access to the Red Sea.

Administration insiders say the plan evolved as part of a longer-range Goldberg-Rusk-McNamara-Rostow program to create an international military force which could be used to establish U.N. authority over Southwest Africa, now controlled by South Africa.

Under this program, U.S. warships and a fleet of the fast deployment logistics (FDL) vessels would be assigned to the U.N.

COMING CRISIS

Since the South African government is prepared to fight to keep its League of Nations mandate over Southwest Africa, development and deployment of a U.N. naval force could lead to an African confrontation involving U.S. military units.

This alarming possibility caused Sen. Richard Russell, D-Ga., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Rep. Mendel Rivers, D-S.C., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, to join in eliminating funds for the proposed FDL fleet from the administration's \$21 billion military procurement bill.

In sharply worded attacks on the FDL fleet, Russell and Rivers made it clear in floor speeches that they oppose turning over any U.S. ships to the U.N. for so-called "peacekeeping operations."

Rivers later cautioned the White House that the move to deploy a U.N. naval force fitted into the Kremlin's campaign to force the U.S. Sixth Fleet from the Mediterranean. The Russians, he pointed out, could bring pressure on the U.S. within the U.N. to let the U.N. naval force replace the Sixth Fleet.

If this Soviet maneuver succeeded, the Kremlin could then hamstring the U.N. naval force by use of its veto in the Security Council and continue to build up its own naval power in the Mediterranean.

Russian strength there is already presenting the U.S. with an ominous challenge.

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In a recent speech in Rome, Admiral Martin stressed that the Russians had doubled the number of their warships in the Mediterranean since they began operating earlier this year from Egyptian bases.

SETTING THE STAGE

The Kremlin's manipulation of the Middle East crisis was outlined to the House Foreign Affairs Committee in a closed door briefing by Central Intelligence authorities.

The lawmakers were told that Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko had arranged to have Nasser enter the entrance of the Gulf of Aqaba when he visited Cairo in mid-April.

After the CIA briefing, Rep. Thomas Morgan, D-Pa. chairman, warned:

"The Russians are deliberately staging a diversionary crisis in the Middle East to try to tie our hands in Vietnam. There are signs that the Kremlin is planning to set off other crises.

"The Russians appear to be controlling events and forcing us to over-extend militarily and economically at little cost to themselves. We are always reacting rather than acting. This policy could be very dangerous for the U.S. unless changed."

DARKER DAYS AHEAD

Henry Jackson, D-Wash. who on May 3 predicted a Russian diversionary move in the Middle East, joined in warning of still more Soviet-inspired trouble.

In discussions with fellow-members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Jackson reported growing evidence the Russians may touch off a new crisis in either West Berlin or Cuba.

Jackson noted that the new Soviet arms build-up in Cuba, which began in April, is continuing with daily arrivals of new shipments of Russian military equipment.

A Japanese businessman, returning via the U.S. from trade talks in Havana, supports Sen. Jackson's concern about Cuba. In information passed to the CIA, this industrialist quoted a high Cuban official as saying the U.S. will be forced to give up the naval base at Guantanamo Bay before the end of 1967.

FOREIGN FLASHES

Ships for an enlarged Saudi Arabian navy will be purchased from Britain. At present, this pro-U.S. nation's navy is confined mainly to patrol boats for coastguard duties. But because of the changing Middle East situation, Saudi Arabia plans to buy several corvettes, minesweepers, and frigates . . . The French government, which has been looking for some time for new sources of uranium, is now negotiating for a concession in Nigeria. The deposits are reported to be 10 times bigger than those of Gabon, where France has obtained most of its supplies until now. France has small deposits of uranium on her own territory, but needs much more for her growing nuclear arms program.

The boxed portion of this article did not appear in the Northern Virginia Sun for 1 June 1967.

LAS VEGAS SUN
JUN 2 1967